REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 13 has been added.

Claim 1 has amended to further recite that the static pressure regulating system includes a switch valve for alternately connecting the working air chamber to a vacuum source and the atmosphere at a frequency significantly higher than a frequency of the vibration to be damped, and a duty ratio regulating system for regulating a duty ratio of a control signal applied to the switch valve according to the vibration to be damped, such that the duty ratio regulating system changes a ratio of a time of connection of said working air chamber to said vacuum source, to a period of a switching operation of said switch valve so as to regulate a value of a static air pressure applied to said working air chamber. A basis for this amendment is found in paragraphs [0012], [0046] and [0061].

New claim 13 recites that the static pressure regulating system includes a switch valve for alternately connecting the working air chamber to a vacuum source and the atmosphere at a higher frequency, and the switch valve is regulated according to a duty ratio control or a frequency control. A basis for new claim 13 is found in paragraphs [0046] and [0061].

The Examiner objected to the disclosure. The disclosure has been amended accordingly.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b) as being anticipated by Muramatsu et al. (U.S. Patent Number 5,941,512). Claim 1, as amended, relates to a passive type vibration damping device wherein a static air pressure in a working air chamber is statically changed according to vibration to be damped, thereby suitably adjusting its spring characteristics according to vibration to be damped.

In order to have the pneumatically controlled vibration damper operated as described above, claim 1 recites a static pressure regulating system which includes a switch valve for alternately connecting the working air chamber to a vacuum source and the atmosphere at a significantly higher frequency than a frequency of the vibration to be damped, and a duty ratio regulating system for regulating a duty ratio of a control signal applied to the switch valve according to the vibration to be damped, such that the duty ratio regulating system changes a ratio of a time of connection of said working air chamber to said vacuum source, to a period of a switching operation of said switch valve so as to regulate a value of a static air pressure applied to said working air chamber.

Muramatsu et al. relates to an pneumatically controlled active type vibration damper. Indeed, Muramatsu et al. suggests that a dynamic damper of a passive control type, wherein the air chamber is kept at a predetermined negative or positive pressure so as to provide a described spring constant depending upon the frequency of the input vibrations to be damped. However, Muramatsu et al. fails to teach a specific structure of the static air pressure regulating system to realize the suggested operation of the passive dynamic damper, such as a construction defined in the amended claim 1. Therefore, Muramatsu et al. fails to teach all essential elements of the invention defined in claim 1. For at least these reasons, claim 1, as amended, is neither anticipated by nor would have been obvious over Muramatsu et al.

Claims 2-7 each depend either directly or indirectly from the independent claim 1, and are therefore respectfully submitted to be patentable over the art of record for at least the reasons set forth above with respect to claim 1. Additionally, these dependent claims require additional elements that when taken in the context of the claimed invention, further patentably distinguish the art of record. For example, claim 4 recites at least one abutting projection 45 formed on an inner surface of said working air chamber and that the abutting projection that is brought into abutting contact with the elastic connector 16 of the abutting portion of the inner surface opposed to the elastic connector, for applying a restricting force to the elastic connector, by regulating the air pressure in the working air chamber by means of the static pressure regulating system. The Examiner states that the static pressure-regulating system of Muramatsu is operable to regulate the pressure in the working air chamber so that the abutting portion opposed to the elastic connector for applying a restricting force to the elastic connector. The Examiner failed to point out that the abutting projection that is brought into abutting contact with the elastic connector by regulating the air pressure in the working air chamber by means of the static pressure regulating system. This is not disclosed by Muramatsu et al. For at least these reasons, claims 2-7 are not anticipated or made obvious by Muramatsu et al.

Regarding new claim 13, Muramatsu et al. fails to teach the specific control method recited in claim 13, i.e., a duty ratio control and a frequency control, to desirably regulate the static pressure in the working air chamber, so that new claim 13 is neither anticipated by nor would have been obvious over Muramatsu et al.

Applicants believe that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully request a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at (650) 961-8300.

Respectfully submitted,

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